



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 12, 2022

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United Way of La Porte County Sponsors its Final Food Distribution of the Year

United Way of La Porte County partnered with the Food Bank of Northern Indiana and Citizens Concerned for the Homeless (CCH) to sponsor their final Mobile Food Distribution of the year. United Way has sponsored 22 Food Distributions throughout the pandemic, while also providing masks, hand sanitizer, and volunteers at these events. Wednesday's event, as past events have shown, was yet another display of community support and the impact of different organizations coming together for the greater good. The final Food Distribution totals for the day were 6,098 lbs of free, healthy food distributed to 333 families impacting 1,026 individual family members.

Many in our community struggled during the pandemic, but Kris Pate, President of United Way of La Porte County, along with her team and partners were determined to make an impact in the greatest way possible. After discussing with Jim Musical (CCH) and learning the impact that food shortages and lack of food resources was having on the community, a Food Distribution Initiative was born. The Food Bank of Northern Indiana provided the food purchased by United Way while Citizens Concerned for the Homeless organized and operated the planning and distribution.

Since the beginning, these Food Distributions have benefitted from the many community collaborators who have participated. Farmers to Families provided combination boxes featuring dairy, produce, and pre-cooked meat. Purdue Northwest provided many volunteers from their social work program to give their students a chance to see firsthand how our local communities can all come together to work toward a common goal. The Morgan Family Foundation made repeated financial contributions to ensure that families in La Porte County had access to food.

Food supplies continue to be stretched, and it's important for people to understand that food insecurity has no boundaries. These drive-thru distributions are a way to immediately reach members of the community who are struggling to feed themselves and their families. In order to reach the goal of a county-wide impact, the Mobile Food Distributions were held in seven different cities including: Michigan City, La Porte, New Carlisle, Wanatah, Kingsford Heights, Westville, and Hanna.

"We especially want to thank Jim Musial and his staff at Citizens Concerned for the Homeless, the Food Bank of Northern Indiana, the Morgan Family Foundation, and our many volunteers, including Sullair, NIPSCO, GAF Materials, Dollar General, and Visit Michigan City La Porte for helping us meet the needs of those in our community," said Kris Pate, President and CEO of United Way of La Porte County. "The day was made even more special when Dollar General employees presented a \$1000 check to United Way at the event to help support food distributions. Al's Supermarkets, a long-time United Way partner and supporter of the community, chipped in additional food certificates to supplement the ones purchased by United Way," Pate added.

The success of this collaboration has really made a difference for people in our local communities. Throughout the two-year period, this partnership saw 209,210 pounds of free, healthy food distributed to 7,546 families impacting 22,801 individual family members.

At this event, we witnessed over 500 cars circling the entire mall and two out-lots to receive our food supply which was only sufficient to serve 300 families. According to Jim Musial, Executive Director at Citizens Concerned for the Homeless, "There just wasn't enough. La Porte County currently has a Food Insecurity Rate of 13.9%, more than 3.1% above the State of Indiana Rate (10.8%) and 2.1% above the United States Rate (11.8%). (Data source Feeding America)." "Seeing all of those cars in line just shows how there is still a GREAT need for food in our community," said Ellen Mehofer, Director of Community Engagement of United Way of La Porte County.

Our community members are very grateful for this help. So many smiling faces when they pull up for their food, some even have tears of joy and relief. United Way hopes to be able to continue to raise funds for more of these events in 2023. To make a donation, please visit www.unitedwaylpc.org/give-now or mail your gift to United Way of La Porte County, 422 Franklin Street, Suite D, Michigan City, IN 46360.

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